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SUBJECT: CHAD/DARFUR: NEW PATTERNS IN EASTERN CHAD'S
INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE

SUBJECT: CHAD/DRFUR: NEW PATTERNS IN EASTERN CHAD'S
INTER-ETHNIC ATTACKS.

SUMMARY:

¶1. (SBU) Human rights groups and international NGOs point to an apparent shift toward ethnically or racially motivated attacks in eastern Chad in the area bordering Darfur. The period of September 2005 through May 2006 saw numerous such attacks; the month of June has been relatively quiet. Allegations point to Janjawid fighters as the perpetrators, but the distinction is blurring among Sudanese Janjawid, "Arabs" from either Sudan or Chad, and allied Chadian ethnic groups. "African" victims from particular ethnic groups are sustaining repeated attacks until they are robbed of all possessions and either displaced en masse or killed. Chadian security forces, focused on confronting threats to the Deby regime or shielding allied ethnic groups, provide no protection to the victimized populations. Attackers may be motivated by a quest for land, a desire to enrich themselves through simple criminality, the obstruction of transit routes for SLA and JEM activities, or Sudan's use of Janjawid and Chadian groups as proxies in the simmering conflict with Chad's Deby regime. END SUMMARY

NGOS PERCEIVE NEW
PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE

¶2. (SBU) Reports published in June from Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) on violence in the region of eastern Chad bordering Darfur reach strongly similar conclusions regarding the upsurge in attacks seen since at least December 2005. HRW states in "Violence Beyond

Borders: The Human Rights Crisis in Eastern Chad" notes "... an evolution in the pattern of attacks on civilians since January and February 2006 that raises serious concerns about the potential for inter-ethnic or communal violence in eastern Chad." AI's report, "Chad/Sudan - Sowing the Seeds of Darfur - Ethnic targeting in Chad by Janjawid militias from Sudan" states that "... the Janjawid ... have targeted a diverse range of ethnic groups who identify themselves and are identified by others as "African" rather than "Arab" ... while others have been exempted or have become active participants with the Janjawid in attacking their neighbors."

13. (SBU) The rights groups state first that these attacks have reached a new intensity that goes beyond one group seeking to pillage from another. They report that attacks on a given village or group are now often conducted over several days, until the victims are stripped of everything of value, and either displaced en masse away from the Chad/Sudan border -- in either direction -- or are killed. This differs from attacks prior to at least December 2005, which were characterized by simple robbery, with victimized populations left alive if they did not actively resist.

14. (SBU) Second, AI and HRW note that particular ethnic groups from among those generally considered to be "African" rather than Arab" are the targets of the attacks. AI described on June 13 to Ambassador and POL/ECON Officer three zones along the border, in each of which the victimized populations appear to be drawn from different ethnic groups, who have in common (a) relative wealth, (b) sedentary lifestyles, and (c) little direct connection to either Chad's Deby regime, or to the largest rebel forces confronting Deby.

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According to AI, the victims in the northern-most area, following the Chad/Sudan border from the Chadian town of Adre south to Ade, hail largely from the Masalit and Wadai tribes. Continuing south from Ade to the Wadi Azoum watercourse, in the Dar Silla administrative area, the targeted communities are mostly of Dadjo origin. In the southern-most area, from the Wadi Azoum to the Chadian town of Tissi, it is again the Masalit, Wadai, and Dadjo, along with the Fur, who are sustaining most of the attacks.

15. (SBU) Lastly, the rights organizations point to a number of Chadian ethnic groups who appear to be (a) exempted from attack, (b) helping the attackers with information, or (c) actively participating in the violence. Some are generally seen as "Arab" in the region, but others were in the past considered "African" -- either in Chad, or among the same ethnic populations in Sudan, or both. In AI's analysis, the "African" communities in the northern Adre-to-Ade area that seem to have allied themselves with Janjawid fighters are the Mimi and Tama; heading south, there are reports of Mimi and Wadai (the latter group often among the victims in other areas). Farther south, the Tama seem to be joined by the Gimr and Fellata clans in attacking their neighbors with the cross-border raiders.

ICRC CONFIRMS, SEES THREAT
TO HUMANITARIANS

16. (SBU) The Head of Delegation for the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC), Thomas Merkelbach told us that he and his staff perceive the pattern of attacks in much the same way as AI and HRW. His staff note as well hearing criticisms of humanitarian agencies working in the region that are reminiscent of those heard in Darfur as the violence there began to intensify. Local populations seen to be assisting the Janjawid attackers complain that aid organizations are assisting only particular ethnic groups, implying some kind of discrimination in the allocation of aid. Merkelbach said the echoes of these complaints now

heard inside Chad were causing him to more carefully calculate how he was sending ICRC Delegates into the field, and trying to enlarge contact networks in the affected areas to enhance his staff's security.

SULTAN OF DAR SILLA: OUR
MEDIATION ROLE IS IGNORED

¶7. (SBU) Ambassador met June 30 with Seid Ibrahim Mustafa Bakhit, the Sultan of Dar Silla region (a traditional hereditary title). The Sultan, of the Dadjo group, holds court over the middle and southern areas in the AI construct. He confirmed the broad outlines of the HRW and AI analyses, placing the emphasis on the helplessness of his people in the face of (a) well armed, marauding thieves; (b) equally well armed Chadian rebel groups looking westward, and Sudanese rebels looking east; and (c) the Chadian and Sudanese governments, intent on carrying out their feud at the expense of their people. He said that attacks had indeed fallen off in June, but attributed that to the lack of anything else to steal, and any more people to displace in the area accessible to the Chad/Sudan border.

¶8. (SBU) The Sultan painted a clear picture of the scorched earth tactics of the raiders, as well as the cooperation they receive from local Mimi, Tama, and Wadai "visitors" (these groups having arrived in the area from the north during the

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famine of 1984, and intermingled with the indigenous Dadjo peoples). He regretted the fact that the environment had become so poisoned among peoples who had lived quietly together for decades -- in the case of the 1984 migrants -- and sometimes centuries, when speaking of the local Arab groups. "It was our traditional role as Sultan to mediate conflicts among the different groups. But it required a kind of balance of power. We cannot mediate now, because our Dadjo people are armed with arrows and spears, while the raiders and their Chadian allies have sophisticated automatic weapons. How can we assure the security of the border in such circumstances? That is the Chadian Government's task."

WHERE IS CHADIAN SECURITY?

¶9. (SBU) The absence of protection from attack from the Government of Chad's security forces seems tied to slightly different factors in each of AI's three zones. In the Adre-to-Ade area, groups ethnically tied to President Deby's clan of the Zaghawa have been left largely in peace. In fact, most large-scale attacks north of Adre, into the Zaghawa heartland from which both Deby and the rebel group FUCD draw their recruits, ceased as long ago as March 2006, given these populations' ability to call on armed defenders. In addition, SLM/A forces around the towns of Bihari and Tine have helped to provide a buffer against vengeance and other attacks. Further south, however, the Masalit and Dadjo are not important to Deby's power base. This fact makes it easier for the GOC to position its forces outside the areas of Dar Silla and Dar Masalit, between Ade and Tissi.

¶10. (SBU) The GOC may also be calculating from where the next concerted attack on the Deby regime is likely to come, and keeping its forces along those axes, facing the threat. Conventional wisdom and past history would lead those forces to be positioned outside of AI's two southern-most zones, leaving the populations there exposed and vulnerable to marauders. According to the Sultan of Dar Silla, that area, especially south of the Wadi Azoum, is now "ungovernable".

MOTIVATIONS

¶11. (SBU) As noted above, there seems to be a shift in the intensity of the attacks in the region, away from relatively straightforward banditry, and toward clearing the regions of the long-settled "African" populations. Although theft is still a common theme to the attacks of the last 6-10 months, it seems to be theft with a vengeance -- whole populations are reportedly attacked again and again until they are forced to flee -- then attacked again in their place of refuge, until they are far enough away from the border area as to have abandoned their traditional homes. These tactics seem to be born of the ethnic elements mentioned above, but also may have roots in the broader political-military environment of the region -- the spilling over of the conflicts between (a) Chadian President Deby and Sudan's Khartoum regime; (b) the Chadian rebels seeking to oust Deby; and (c) the SLA/SLM and the Khartoum regime in Darfur -- including the internal fighting among the SLA/SLM factions. A key element among these influences is certainly Khartoum's use of the Janjawid as a proxy in efforts to destabilize President Deby's government in N'Djamena.

¶12. (SBU) AI points to other, more localized elements that may be at play, such as the need for land of pastoralists whose traditional migratory routes are disrupted by the

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movement of armed Chadian and Sudanese rebel groups such as the FUCD, the SLA or the JEM. Lastly, a purely ethnic element may be involved, with conflicts among competing groups that had in the past been resolved through mediation by elders and traditional authorities now being left to explode, given the disproportionate power relationships among the groups, and the marginalization of the traditional leaders.

COMMENT

¶13. (SBU) While AI and HRW make strong calls for Chadian and Sudanese authorities to protect the helpless, stop the wicked, and halt their feud, the reality is that both the solutions to the problems underlying these vicious attacks, and the problems themselves, are anything but obvious. It would be unhelpful to single out any one influence in the upsurge of violence -- such as Sudanese use of the Janjawid as their proxy combatants -- as the only cause, and expect that simply pushing for an end to that will resolve the situation. Perhaps AI has it most right: this appears to be the sowing of the seeds of the conflict in Darfur in Eastern Chad, and the crop that comes up threatens to have similarly pernicious results for the surrounding environment as those now festering in Western Sudan. END COMMENT.
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